DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 698 HE 027 700

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TITLE Deliberation on Teaching and Curriculum in Higher Education.
PUB DATE 10 Apr 94
NOTE 27p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 4-8, 1994).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Curriculum; *College Faculty; College Instruction; Course Content; *Curriculum Design; *Decision Making; Educational Philosophy; Higher Education; Interviews; *Teacher Attitudes; Universities; Values

ABSTRACT

This study examined curriculum deliberation and decision-making in higher education through selected interviews with 11 university teachers in 11 different disciplines. All were full-time and tenure-track or already tenured. After completing individual interviews the participants gathered for a culminating discussion. Examination of the data found that faculty used highly textured, nuanced, and unique methods and processes to decide about curriculum. Patterns did emerge and individuals indicated a general preference for ways in which they initiate conceptualization of a course and the development of a syllabus. Individuals also changed their approaches to teaching and development dependant on the context. The deliberative process about teaching and curriculum was linked with individual and disciplinary values which informed teaching, decision-making, and planning. These values are linked to reasons for teaching and thoughts on the aims and purposes of education. Invariably there was synchrony between these elements and professors' efforts to enact their beliefs through their practices either implicitly or explicitly. A copy of the interview protocol is included. Contains 46 references. (JB)

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ED 374 698

"Deliberation on Teaching and Curriculum in Higher Education"

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Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the
American Educational Research Association
April 4-8, 1994
New Orleans, Louisiana

Universities study everything and everybody except themselves -- institutional and popular folklore

I am a teacher educator and I desire to know more about what we do as professors regarding our teaching and the development of curriculum. How do university professors think about teaching and curriculum development and make sense of their work? What frameworks do they bring to bear in light of philosophical orientations, values--personal and disciplinary, decision-making, goals, understandings about teaching and learning which inform their work and influence their lived experiences ad educators? It is answers to these questions which this inquiry guided (Layder, 1993; Mischler, 1990) research based upon discovery and exploration, addresses. Using the grounded theory approach which acknowledges the human dimensions of society and social relations, and the importance of meanings in people's lives, thus focusing upon "subjectivity," of individuals and the ways in which social meanings emerge in given contexts. It is my hope that this project will yield insight into the subjective understandings of the people who are the subjects of this research, in this case university professors and their thinking on teaching and curriculum.

Contribution of this Study

We do not know what teachers in higher education think about their teaching and we do not know the cognitive processes in which they engage when then develop curriculum. This study will contribute to the research on teaching and learning in the following ways: 1) it addresses curriculum development and teaching in higher education--an area not nearly as often the subject of research as are elementary and secondary education; 2) it examines teaching from the perspective of university teachers themselves through metacognitive reflection -- that is their self-conscious thinking about their beliefs, practices, and decision-making processes; 3) it is intended to yield insight into how university teachers conceive of themselves as curriculum makers and work towards improving their teaching, and hence the quality of education for students.

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Existing Literature in the Field

Research on teaching and curriculum development has focused primarily upon elementary and secondary levels of education with emphasis upon teaching practices, student learning and curricular interventions and/or innovations. Very little attention has been given to the study of curriculum development and teaching in higher education--with an emphasis upon the role of the teacher as a curriculum worker, an active agent in the interpretation of a discipline or field, and decision maker about what to teach, why and how (Clandinin, 1992; Jackson, 1992; Ramsden, 1992). This is a new field of inquiry. The principal questions which drive this research are as follows: how do university teachers see themselves as curriculum makers; how do they think and make decisions about their teaching; how do they interpret their experiences and give meaning to their work?

The extant literature on curriculum development and teaching describes teaching and engaging others actively in learning as a dynamic and multifaceted process. The related research addresses a broad range of issues which can be clustered in the following categories: teacher reflection, planning and decision-making; teacher knowledge of and interaction with students; ethics, beliefs and values and their affects upon teaching and learning.

Specifically, the literature (again primarily focused upon elementary and secondary education) which has investigated what is that teachers do and how they see themselves, has identified a number of pivotal issues which shape understandings of teachers and their work. Accordingly, teaching is a complex activity rooted in uncertainty (McDonald, 1992); it is grounded in contextual decision-making--knowledge and understanding of particular subject matter and particular students within particular learning environments (Clark and Yinger, 1977; Calderhead, 1984; Elbaz, 1983; Clark and Peterson, 1986), and it involves confronting and negotiating ethical dilemmas (Lyons, 1990; Strike and Soltis, 1985). It is through reflection (in action and on action) that teachers examine their experiences, practices and knowledge, with the aim of improving their teaching (Schon, 1983; Macrorie, 1984; Okazawa-Rey, Anderson and Traver, 1987; Bullough, 1989; McMahon, 1992; Russell and Munby, 1992; Schubert and Ayers, 1992; Stones, 1992; Goodson, 1992). Teacher theorizing (personal frames of reference regarding the use of knowledge and lessons drawn from experience) about teaching and learning is embedded in values and beliefs which influence practices, decision-making, and the development of professional knowledge (Shulman, 1986; Calderhead, 1988; Wayne, Cornett, and McCutcheon, 1992). Articulation of the ways in which teachers give meaning to their work and make sense of what they do is indicative of the metaphors (and/or descriptive words and phrases) which they use as powerful tools for both teaching and learning (Manhood, 1987; Allender, 1991; Tobin and La Master, 1992).

While the scholarship and research on teaching alluded to above, has added considerably to our understanding of curriculum

development and teaching, it has not provided insight into how **university professors** conceptualize what they do, engage in curriculum development, and make decisions about teaching. Further, the literature does not yield insight into the relationship between how university professors think about curriculum and the actual development of courses to teach. These are the issues which this study addresses.

Description of the Project

This study was designed to conduct research into curriculum deliberation and decision-making in higher education through selected interviewing of university teachers in various disciplines. Deliberative inquiry is a rigorous, disciplined intellectual process which involves what Schwab (1964, 1983) identifies as the four "commonplaces" of education -- student, teacher, subject-matter, and milieu -- as they impinge upon choice and action within the context of "practical problems" rooted in specific situations and the search for alternatives in teaching and learning.

Within the context of this study, curriculum is defined as an interpretation of a discipline or field in terms of what should be taught and how--including issues related to content, scope, depth, learning activities and processes, assessment and evaluation of student learning and work, as well as values embedded in the treatment and meanings inscribed to knowledge and information. Through individual interviews, reviews of relevant course syllabi, as well as discussion about how courses are conceived, organized, developed, and revised, the goal is to understand the theoretical frameworks which inform approaches to teaching and the processes which influence and shape course content, instructional methods, and materials. The principal questions this research addresses include the following: 1) How do teachers define teaching and learning and what assumptions undergird their thinking and practices? 2) When, why and how do teachers develop new courses? 3) How do teachers revise or transform courses previously taught? 4) What principles govern the determination of subject matter, focus, the inclusion and/or exclusion of material? 5) What methods are used to determine teaching and course effectiveness? 6) What is the nature of ongoing reflection about teaching in which teachers engage? 6) What kinds of on-going reflection about one's teaching do teachers engage in? 7) In what ways do teachers integrate lessons learned from student responses to texts, materials, processes, and classroom ecology and change their practices? 8) How do individual teachers view their development of courses within the larger context of curriculum development and pedagogy?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What subject(s)--disciplines/fields do you teach?
2. What courses do you teach?
3. Why do you teach what you teach?
   What is your philosophical orientation to teaching and learning?

   Possible prompts for eliciting in depth responses...
   (what values do you bring to teaching? what are your priorities? how do you define your role as teacher? how do you define the role of learners?...)

   How do you define teaching?
   How do you define learning?

   What values and assumptions--in your discipline/field, about the teaching-learning dynamic--are of most importance to you? Comment and explain.
   What general goals and objectives do you have in your teaching in general, irrespective of specific courses?

4. How do you teach what you teach?
   (methods, materials, processes and instructional strategies)

5. What is your definition of curriculum?
   Do you see yourself actively engaged in curriculum development? Comment and Explain.

6. In general, how do you develop courses; what methods and processes do you use?

   a. What factors do you take into account? (for example, the department, colleagues, students and student responses, developments in your particular field, research and new publications..., scheduling, time, constraints?)

   b. Do you keep a journal, a log or any form of written notes...about actual, "delivered curriculum" -- notes or impressions about insights, changes, revisions, issues to be addressed, things you have learned -- which might inform your judgment about how to teach the course in the future?

7. Then, we will turn our attention to a discussion of a particular course--one which has been selected by the instructor--and the processes by which the instructor, deliberated, reflected, made decisions, and ultimately developed a given course and designed the syllabus, or changed a given course and made revisions in the course syllabus.
   We will examine the reasoning and the rationales.

At this point, a number of questions will be asked, regarding the processes used. For example, we could begin with a question, "How did you determine or select the title of this course"? How do you determine how much material is to be covered? How do you determine the scope and depth of subject matter? What constraints, for example, issues of resources influence your decision-making? (For the additional questions, I will ask the interviewee to "think aloud, and walk us through the process, step-by step, recreating your journey in conceptualizing a course from beginning finished product to revisions...and transformations."

8. In revising and transforming courses, how do you make decisions about the following and what are your rationales? (Prompts...)
   * What to include and exclude.
   * Instructional methods and processes: (lecture, individual and collaborative learning; guest presenters, field experiences, uses of technology...)
   * The nature of assignments and projects
   * How student learning and achievement will be evaluated.

9. Reflections: How successful are you in meeting your own objectives as a teacher? In creating meaningful contexts for student learning? How long have you been teaching?

10. Describe how your ideas about teaching and learning have changed since you began teaching.

    What metaphor(s), descriptive words/ phrases would you use to describe your orientation to teaching? Has this conception of teaching remained constant? Comment and explain.

11. Any additional thought or comments on teaching and learning, or curriculum development which you would like to add?

The above questions were examined against a backdrop of a literature review which addresses salient issues regarding teacher reflection, deliberation, and curriculum development, viewed through the lens of one's own teaching practices as a curriculum worker. Through an examination of individual approaches to the development of course syllabi, we will attempt to interpret the meanings which teachers give to their thinking processes, decision-making, philosophical orientations, values, presuppositions and practices. We have sought to know how the meanings of courses are constructed in the minds the teachers: how they make sense of their own discipline(s) and subject matter(s) and how these things inform their practices -- choices and actions.

Methodology

Background

In this limited study, I interviewed eleven university professors in eleven different disciplines and fields. All were full-time and tenure-track: six were tenured and five were non-tenured. Three were full professors, three were associate professors, four were assistant professors, and one was a lecturer. There were seven women and four men. Eight were white and three were people of color. Length of experience in teaching spanned three to twenty-five years. I selected the particular individuals because through contacts, primarily informal, and on the basis of reputations (by other faculty members as well as students) of being thoughtful teachers, I believe that they would be amenable to discussing their work. My purpose was to discover what a variety of university professors think, and how they reflect upon their work. Through description of these processes, and determination of themes, I hoped to gain some understanding into the nature of their deliberations and then explore the implications for teaching and learning in higher education.

In inviting individuals to participate, I briefly explained that I was interested in learning about how they think about their teaching and their experiences in curriculum development. Appointments were arranged, and in preparation I asked each individuals to think about their teaching, and to bring a course syllabus to serve as a catalyst for discussion in a portion of the interview. Each was asked eleven open-ended questions which were asked in the same sequence with very little variation in wording. The length of the interview sessions ranged from one hour and fifteen minutes to two hours. After I posed each question, the interviewee responded until she or he felt a sense of closure. Occasionally when the respondent digressed too far from the topic, I moved the conversation on to the next question. Upon completion of each session, we briefly discussed their thoughts about their experience of being interviewed. All interviews were conducted at the institution where each faculty member worked and we met in a small, private conference room. I audio-taped each interview and took periodic notes. The tapes were transcribed by a professional.

Given that the goal of this research is to study curriculum as it relates to the development of courses and syllabi in various subject areas, I chose to interview several professors at length. I have selected this method because I believe it most appropriate for my purposes: to be able to probe deeply in engaging teachers in their thinking about their teaching through reflection about the development and/or revision of a particular course they have taught or plan to teach. The long interview approach provides a method by which to gain detailed information about a variety of university teachers and their approaches to teaching and curriculum development. Interviewing at length has provided me with occasions to pursue issues which emerge in response to questions posed to interviewees and discussions which flow from them--ideas to which I otherwise would not have access in a questionnaire. I examined

the development and/or the revision of particular courses within the context of processes in curriculum development. After completing all individual interviews, I conducted a culminating discussion in which nine out of the eleven were able to participate. Two were unable to attend because of prior commitments on the best days to meet for the majority of participants within a reasonable time period. The purpose of this session was to debrief and discuss issues and ideas which have emerged as a result of having participated in this study. I was particularly interested in exploring how participation in this project has engendered thinking about processes and practices regarding curriculum and course development in general, and their own teaching in particular.

The material I have gathered in this project will be the basis for case studies in deliberation about teaching and curriculum. In the next stage of this project, I will write narrative case studies which will constitute my vignettes into the curriculum development process with the aim of revealing a range of processes as well as a diversity of conceptual frameworks which university teachers bring to their work as they theorize, make choices and act. I hope to illuminate the meanings embedded in stories teachers tell about what they teach, why and how.

The individuals I selected to interview teach in a broad range of disciplines and fields which are represented in the following broad categories: social and behavioral sciences--inclusive of interdisciplinary areas; fine arts and literature; and physical sciences. Specifically, they are as follows:

Anthropology	History	Physics
Art	Mathematics/Math Education	Religious Studies
Communication	Philosophy	Womens Studies
Education	Political Science	

Each of the participants in this study will receive a copy of the article for their review and comment. Ideally, we will be able to get together again as a group and discuss this work; their responses and comments will inform revisions and editing before I consider the piece complete. I hope to engage in dialogue about this project with them as part of discussion and reflection about teaching in higher education. In some modest ways, I hope that this project will contribute to efforts related to faculty development and teaching enhancement.

Themes and Patterns

> *"Education is transformation. It means that the student who comes into the classroom does not leave as the same student. And it means that the teacher who comes into the classroom does not leave as the same teacher."*
>
> *-- Jose Solis*

Why one Teaches what one Teaches

In response to the question, "Why do you teach what you teach," the interviewees commented and shared ideas related to interest in ideas, their own desire to learn more, commitment to cultivating personal growth and development of students, beliefs in human agency and possibilities for social change. Representative direct quotations which follow, capture the range of responses--all of which implicitly or explicitly alluded to change in light of goals to get students to know, think, understand, question, develop a sense of themselves and others and act:

> *"I teach out of a concern about the human condition and am committed to social change..."*
>
> *"I love my discipline/field and find it interesting."*
>
> *"I am fascinated with ideas and I teach what I want to learn."*
>
> *"I teach to help others perceive deeper meanings in what they see."*
>
> *"I teach to engage students in reflection about self in relationship to society."*
>
> *"I teach to expose students to knowledge and create empathy."*
>
> *" I teach in an area in which I have expertise."*

Several thematic clusters emerged regarding primary motivations for teaching in particular disciplines. Three respondents explicitly addressed the politics of education and raised issues related to inequality, social justice and fairness, as well as possibilities for social change. Personal and intellectual interest in subject-matter was mentioned by four participants who stated that they entered teaching and pursued particular fields because of interest in ideas, issues, phenomena and the like. Two stressed the importance of helping others to see, interpret and understand... One emphasized the importance of exposing students to a certain body of knowledge and laying a foundation for more advanced work.

The various philosophical orientations which undergirded the various orientations to teaching are grounded in a number of assumptions about teaching and learning. these thoughts are reflected in a number of responses which allude -- directly or indirectly -- to the power of ideas, cultivation of critical and independent thinking, and the challenging of assumptions regarding beliefs about education, its aims and purposes and value. Again, clusters of ideas emerged: one faculty member stated that " All learning is subversive," and according to three other faculty members, it engenders critical thinking and the questioning of "assumptions, presumptions, and prejudices...and taken-for-granted things."

Several individuals talked about the need to understand power and power relations in the classroom as these things relate to

relationships between and among professors and students -- stressing the importance of the teacher as facilitator, discussion leader, who invites, encourages and indeed insists upon active student participation and engagement in learning. In this regard, several individuals spoke of the importance of dialogue and conversation in the classroom and the creation of a climate in which there is open yet rigorous exchange as a result of "creating a forum in which students can be open about what they think and feel but also set some limits and ground rules about respecting other people's viewpoints." Three individuals spoke forthrightly of the importance of building self-confidence, a belief in self and growth in student understanding as central to their role as educators. One individual stressed the importance of nurturing "creativity in thinking and doing." Understanding group dynamics and being sensitive to classroom ecology was a recurrent theme in all responses.

My question about assumptions held about teaching and learning, yielded a range of responses wherein teaching was defined variously: "creation of possibilities regarding the improving of the human condition; creating an environment to draw out students; exposing them to bodies of knowledge and ideas; developing a sense that they can figure out things for themselves; a teacher is one who shares knowledge with others...; is a mentor, a collaborator... a resource person. Ideas about learning were inextricably bound with ideas about teaching. Learning was defined in a number of ways: "transformation for both students and teachers; everyone is a learner; ...an ongoing process of adapting to the world and others; an ability to step outside of self and what is familiar; being responsible and accountable for doing what is necessary to understand [ideas, processes, texts, materials...under examination].

The most important personal and disciplinary values informing approaches to teaching were identified as follows: making subject-matter accessible; engagement in serious reading and writing; inquiry and reflection, systematic and analytical thinking; insight, growth, development and change. One professor in particular, articulated the nexus of these values as follows:

> *[I believe that] students should be well informed, acknowledging of diversity and principled. In terms of the way my discipline feeds into that, or how that feeds into the discipline, I again think that philosophical as well reflective inquiry have the potential, of contributing to one's understanding of one's own values, and hopefully, towards one's propensity to change those values if one finds in such a change an improvement is made in regards to the human condition...I look in the discipline not necessarily for answers to those issues, but for questions that might engender in students inquiry and examination, a critical self-examination, along gender, race, and class lines.. in light of their future profession and its importance to others. In terms of the priorities I bring to education, I embrace change, influenced by values which look favorably at education informed by antiracist, anti-sexist anti-classist, and anti-homophobic...In my teaching, we examine issues and ideas so that we can understand ways in which what we think and do in our lives are not necessarily mutually exclusive."*

Another professor offers these thoughts:

I'm kind of counter-disciplinary in that I have chosen not to be like many theorists in my field who think of themselves as the privileged inheritors of a privileged tradition. Theory is often put on a pedestal by those to study it, by those who teach it...I take a much different tactic...I think all of us are theorists... the task for those of us who teach [theory] is to take the kinds of implicit theory-making that every individual does when they look at the world around them and organize their observations into patterns that make sense to them, and make that explicit in terms of coming to a greater level of consciousness and maybe making some use of the patterns and explanations that's going on informally..."

How One Teaches

Each interviewee articulated a desire to create and sustain synchrony between goals and objectives, embedded values, and their pedagogical practices. Each interviewee used a variety of teaching methods dependent upon the course -- its content and level -- although several individuals had preferred approached such as lecturing along with some discussion, demonstration and discussion, questioning and dialoguing. Six stated that they so "some lecturing" while others preferred giving "mini-lectures, talks, presentations and/or commentary along with questioning and answering or discussion. all engaged students in discussion, dialogue and exchange in greater or lesser degrees. Asking questions -- employing the Socratic method, to prompting and probing and inviting students to pose questions or develop questions for discussion and review of material -- are integral to each professor's teaching.

Six professors regularly require collaborative activities in the form of team projects and presentations rooted in inquiry, analysis and examination of ideas and issues. Several individuals employ problem-based learning through the use of hypothetical situations, scenarios, simulations, role-playing as opportunities for students to apply knowledge.

Regarding assessment and evaluation of student learning, five professors use "objective" tests, quizzes and exams which often incorporate multiple-choice, problems to be solved, short answer responses and/or analytical essays. These forms of assessment and evaluation of student learning are related to the nature of the course (physical science, mathematics, social sciences, arts and humanities) and values about what students need to know to demonstrate mastery of material in a given discipline or field. Nine of the professors "regularly require a lot of reading and writing -- essays and exposition and response papers as ways to get students to critically examine ideas. Three persons explicitly commented on "getting students to read and interpret difficult texts." Several interviewees require research papers for both graduate as well as upper level undergraduate courses.

Four professors regularly use audiovisual materials--videos, films, slides as well as audio tapes -- to enhance their teaching. One individual regularly uses field experiences as integral to her

teaching. Three regularly use field trips and experiences to take students outside of the classroom and conduct research, observe or interview. A few use guest speakers periodically dependent upon the course and availability. Several commented that they feel that they should take more advantage of what the city has to offer.

Four of the professors stated that in their teaching, they take direction from students -- their interests and abilities -- regarding emphasis of ideas, treatment of materials and scope of issues addressed, as well as the nature of assignments required. Many use interdisciplinary approaches and seek to make connections between classroom knowledge and school knowledge with the lived experiences of students outside of the university.

Defining Curriculum

Clearly there were different perceptions of curriculum and curriculum development and what these things mean -- some quite narrow and limited to content of a given course, others encompassing the institution, its mission and interrelationships between various departments and programs. Below are some representative thoughts and ideas regarding how different professors define curriculum:

> *Curriculum is everything we do in terms of what goes on in the classroom -- content, context, pedagogy, values, voices, involving all of the actors [in the institution]*
>
> *""...innovation, risk taking, demystification, and change..."*
>
> *"...the organization and structure of what we do...what we think, value, and believe others should know and be able to do; an ongoing process of adjustment, fine tunings, compromises and decision-making..."*
>
> *" ...a collaborative effort with colleagues"*
>
> *"the designing of [new] courses and new programs: goals, objectives content, format, processes, sequencing of activities, requirements, assignments, and evaluation..."*
>
> *" a willingness to live with uncertainty"*
> *developing curriculum means thinking about what things are likely to add to student experiences and growth"*

Involvement in Curriculum Development

All of the professors indicated that they have been involved in "curriculum making" -- whether this has meant developing new courses, substantively revising old ones, or serving on departmental, college or university committees to review, examine programs and make changes or propose new ones.

Varieties of General Approaches to Developing Courses

In sharing general methodologies about how one develops courses, the interviewees describe a range of approaches which can

be clustered into four broad categories; number of faculty using this approach appears in parentheses:

> beginning by asking a lot of questions, jotting them down, then doing a lot of reading for additional information and ideas (2)
>
> beginning with something one is interested in, wants to learn more about, and/or books or authors that one wants to read. This approach often involves sharing of ideas with colleagues regarding materials, topics and themes etc. (5)
>
> beginning by thinking about subject matter and making decisions about what one believes is most important and worthy for students to know (3)
>
> begins with deliberation about the course in relationship to university mission, considers students...generates themes to be explored, shares framework with students, and then constructs a syllabus. This approach also incorporates idea generation in terms of faculty learning as a driving force. (1)

A caveat. While four frameworks have been used to cluster different approaches to the development of courses, this by no means implies that they are mutually exclusive. To the contrary. What the clustering does do however is to characterize different ways in which professors initiate their thinking about, conceptualization and decision making processes related to developing courses. Once the process had begun, each individual ultimately addresses issues of course goals and objectives, teacher expectations, texts and readings, assignments and activities, processes, assessment and evaluation of student learning -- standard ingredients in departmental syllabi. Common issues and concerns and attention to constraints included the following: length of the term, time and scheduling of the course (eg. one three--hour session per week, a MWF schedule of three one-hour sessions, or a Tuesday-thursday schedule, of two one and one half hour sessions...), class size, level, availability of texts and other resources.(eg. labs, library use etc.)

Representative quotes from each interviewee provide a sense of the rich texture of the responses regarding individual methods used in the planning and development of courses:

> *"I do a lot of thinking...then consider department norms regarding required content or elements...then I begin making decisions regarding content, scope, readings, assignments and the like..."*
>
> *"...I start with ideas, issues which interest me...things I want to know more about...then I develop questions, ...conceptualize a problematic or theme, then I search for new books and articles..."*

"Assuming that the topic has been decided, I begin thinking about what aspects of the field are really essential...then I begin to read to inform myself as well as to get ideas to develop a packet of readings...I take care to include various perspectives and opposing views where possible."

"I first do a lot of reading and then make a list of themes which emerge... then I'll write on the computer dozens of questions that need to be answered...then I conduct a literature search for books, reviews, journal articles...then I generate different course outlines...then I determine basic areas to be covered...then a syllabus emerges. then I begin looking for resources -- videos, films, audiotapes, guest speakers and talk with colleagues."

"I begin with discussions with colleagues, then I develop key concepts, followed by a search for materials...followed by development of assignments etc...

"I start by being interested in something in which I have not done a lot of reading... then I begin pulling materials together...then I begin the process of thinking about goals, assignments. Another way is to experiment on a smaller scale: I will try out new material in an existing course...consider student reactions and then develop a course syllabus or a proposal to the department."

"Basically, I look for topics that are interesting [to me] ...which will also provide vehicles for talking about particular phenomenon --things easy to demonstrate how to think about, observe, understand, interpret-- to provide insight regarding mistakes and misconceptions with the goal of helping us understand what we mean by science."

"I begin with the discipline or interdisciplinary traditions...then ask myself questions regarding what are the foundations etc? Then I start looking for things which would challenge the taken-for-granted nature of these foundations...then I select appropriate readings, generating a wish list...then I think about student participation...then I develop a syllabus."

"I consider the university's mission, the city, the context--historical, geographical, political, social...from which I develop generative themes. Then I search for and select readings...books and articles, films and videos, possible guest speakers. I then share these things with my students during the first session of the course. From there I develop a framework for a course syllabus which is refined through the teaching/learning process. I involve students in determining topics, assignments and evaluation."

"I ask myself, what would I like to read next year? I put unusual reading together to challenge and engage myself and students...then I attend to details. [When I was chair] I [would also] begin by talking with colleagues, posing the question: what should we do next year? We then engage in joint readings and discussions. We then develop separate syllabi which are discussed and then revised through collaborative work. We dream things up together..."

Revising and Transforming Courses: Processes

When I queried the interviewees in this study about how they revise courses, I was particularly interested in having them discuss whether or not they used a systematic method beyond just deciding to do things differently, or making changes in light of student responses or their own critical reflection. In this regard, I specifically asked if they kept a journal or log for written notes, thoughts about a given course or whether or not they keep mental notes to mark that something different needed to be

done or repeated -- where, why, how? Six professors responded that they do keep a journal or a log, a folder or file and/or make written notes on a course syllabus and related materials--about changes to be made. Two professors who keep systematic notes, described in detail their journaling and logging: One keeps notes in a computer file for each course/syllabus and the other keeps a journal. One of these respondents describes his method as follows:

> *While I'm teaching, I put little postit notes on my calendar. when I get home, I call up the syllabus file on my computer. In the box at the head of each file, I enter and store all of my impressions from the term's teaching -- all of the problems. When I get the results of the student evaluations, I plug in whatever comments they have made. the next time I teach that course, I look at the box and use the information to recreate the course, changing whatever needs to be changed, redesigning whatever needs to be redesigned, generally paying attention to what worked and what didn't. I do this will all of my classes."*

Six professors responded that they made mental notes during a particular class session, at the end of a course, or while preparing a new syllabus for the next time a course is to be taught. Two individuals said that they will definitely keep a journal or a log in the future and one volunteered that because she is currently involved in a new program, that she will keep a journal to track issues, thoughts. One professor volunteered that she probably should keep a journal, but was not sure that she could commit to investing the necessary time. Others likewise thought that keeping a journal and writing down ideas (by hand or on the computer) was a good idea, but given their practice of never teaching a course the same way again, they could not see themselves doing this. Here I offer a comment which is quite apt in this regard: I have to work hard at each individual syllabus because I may never come this way again...If its stuff that I'm refining too much, then I should be producing gasoline. But I'm not. I'm a teacher."

Discussion of Processes Involved in the Development of Particular Courses

Many times the titles of courses are inherited and faculty have no say. In some cases, however, titles have been narrowed, broadened, or otherwise qualified to clarify focus and treatment of subject matter. For introductory and required courses in programs and majors, several departments have generic syllabi which include broad categories of issues and ideas which must be included. In these instances, faculty then can use their own judgement and discretion in determining additional material to be addressed. Two faculty explicitly commented upon how their research informs their teaching regarding the inclusion of new ideas, perspectives and methodologies.

Several professors commented upon how their teaching has informed their research because of issues, questions, problems which have presented themselves through discussion of material in

class. Assignments, projects, activities and resources as well as supplementary materials are "crafted in light of particular course goals, and the nature of the intended student group. Two individuals commented upon how ideas for course were changed in light of differences in students when one has moved from teaching from one university to another where different kinds of things have been emphasized: research, teaching, theory building and the like.

To illustrate the different texturing involved in development of particular courses regarding the processes involved from conceptualization, planning and decision making, I share four vignettes:

An Anthropologist, course, Nationalism

..."I did not have any choice in the title. I began asking myself what to include, what not to include? I was not interested in teaching the course as a political scientist or an historian. I was not interested in an array of personalities, events, or issues. What really interested me was that it [nationalism] has made the nation sacred...I wanted to know what could possibly possess people to worship nations. So I saw the problem of nationalism as a problem of cultural authentication of a sacred symbol. So I picked a series of situations in which my students could discover individuals making choices about their national identities along with all other identities they had. I decided to pay some lip service to historical narrative by picking one 19th century example, and then a couple of 20th century examples, at least one of which would include a former European colony. then I felt some desire to cover as many continents as I could... so it seemed natural that the 19th century example ought to be from Europe, Germany or Italy. The colonial example ought to come from Latin America or Africa. the Third example, a post-war sort of thing, might come from Asia, or I have used both Syria and Thailand. And then the fourth example, if I had time for it [which I haven't yet], ought to come from someplace really close to home like Puerto Rico or Quebec. In this way what students come away from this course with content-wise is a fairly good sense of what the difference is between 19th and 20th century experiences in this peculiar religion. As for assignments, I developed a scenario for group projects: You're so and so. The year is such and such. You have been asked to do X. Do you do it? Why? X is a national act or some advice about how a leader should respond to something. And then the students have to learn about that situation and to whom that person is tot write a report. [Here's an illustration] For example, I model the process with the first scenario: You are a 70 year old advisor to ludwig the First of Bavarian. Its March of 1871. You have to conduct research to understand...He's just received a communication from Bismarck inviting Bavarian into the Union...This paper is really about, What is a Bavarian? Catholic? aristocrat? An urban worker?...Another time, the assignment is , What is a Ghanaian as opposed to being an Ashanti? What is a Puerto Rican?...Who are these people? What do they feel inside them that makes them Bavarian, Ghanaian? Thai?

The class meets three times week and I lecture on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. We discuss and I bring in easels with markers. We collect and share materials...Students write individual papers. Then there is the debate. I divide the entire class, regardless of group membership in half, and separate them into states. I arbitrarily pick one side of the room to argue one kind of action and the other, to argue another actior. so regardless of what position, students have taken in their papers, they need to know enough about the situation to argue both sides...

Historian, course, African American Politics and Resistance in the 20th Century

"I revised the title from just being African American politics because I wanted to send the message to prospective students that we were also talking about other kinds of resistance, that is grassroots organizations, community organizations, mass movements...we're also talking about cultural resistance--the ways in which people don' conform to what the society says they ought to be -- as acts of resistance. So...we expand the definition of politics beyond a very narrow scope that we usually see it as...

Regarding texts, I used Black Leaders of the 20th Century (a collection of biographical sketches of people I thought students should know about. I used an historical text, a reference book, which filled in the blanks. Then I decided upon a book of documents, Black Protest Thought in the 20th Century, which includes actual speeches, leaflets and documents from historical periods as they relate to black protest and politics. Then, I added a text, When and Where I Enter, which brings in Black womens voices and experiences.

In terms of organization, the course is divided: one half is a chronological sweep and the other half is composed of thematic sections. I begin with an introduction and talking about approaches to history and different approaches to African American History...We read a historiographical piece to introduce them to some of these issues. Then we start off talking about the turn of the century and two different approaches to leadership: Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. DuBois and how the themes which come out of differences between those two individuals have influenced a lot of black politics since then. We go on to do a chronological study and examination of the NAACP and Tuskegee and the emergence of these different Black antiracism organizations. then we go on to Garvey and Harlem and World War I and so forth. Then on through the Civil Rights Movement of the 60s and 70s.

Then, we start talking about themes: affirmative action, racial reforms and racial politics in the electoral arena, ... Black feminist politics. And then I have a part of the course where I ask students to revisit historical characters and discuss their meanings in their own time period and their meanings now, and why it's important to make these distinctions...which leads us into examination of persons elevated as heroes and role models, their values, and actions. The course has a couple of quizzes in the beginning...then a midterm and a final(?)

Art Historian, course, Chicago Architecture and Urbanism

"I'll start with the title which was initially, Chicago Architecture, and had to change because when I define architecture, I mean it in a very broad sense. Colleagues in my discipline, define architecture to mean city planning and infrastructure and parks... we're also interested in how buildings work and how well they function [socially, religiously, politically], and how well it represents its time, place and period, even in some cases the ego of the architect...So I changed the title to Chicago Architecture and urbanism. In a sense that addresses issues of scope and depth because to me architecture is a bout how people, allotted land and buildings express and embody the history of a city and its people and its changing social, political and spiritual values.

In this course, we start with the "Big Bang. The most important cosmic event that shaped the history of Chicago, was the ice Age...and I go on to geology and glaciers ...which left us Lake Michigan and a river system that drained into the Lake... and make allusions to another river system that drained into the Mississippi which shaped Chicago's destiny...Native Americans and portage and the building of canals... then we're up to the French connection.

I'm going to [digress here]...Here, were' going from my next book to my teaching. I decided that I was going to make very narrow parameters, so I'm going to write about where people have altered the landscape (landscape architecture) and built buildings (architecture) and they did it because they wanted to express something and it had to be in Illinois...I had heard about Kehokea where the Amerindians had built earth mounds with huts, little temples on the top...We visited the site...Now you see, when I teach this course next time, I will have

to include the earthmounds and temples that the archaeologists have reconstructed. They believe that there was a Woodhenge in Kehokea. They excavated and realized that the cedar stains previously discovered -- 12 of them were in a circle...which line up with the equinox. So you stand there at this Woodhenge and way west of this temples, and at the equinox, you look at this temple which has 4 terraces [and the base is bigger than the pyramids of Egypt... the largest human made thing in the U.S.] and you're standing there and the sun comes up at the equinox and it looks like this...mountain is giving birth to the sun at the equinox. I think they were sun-worshippers...This might be the first chapter of my next book...Then, I'll incorporate my slides and lecture on Chicago, 1673-1848, the explorers. Then, I do the World's Fair. Then...we do the skyscrapers, and we do the plan of Chicago and its urbanism, ...Frank Lloyd Wright and the Prairie School... a cruise on a boat [we do a lot of field work], we go to a park, ...to the top of the Sears Tower...to the Chicago Commission on Landmarks to get a feeling for their survey techniques and preservation issues. And we go on to Modernism, Post-modernism and Deconstructionism and how these thing have entered the discipline of architecture and how that has affected architectural practice... I try to give students some of the theory that's behind the big shifts in architectural practice now. A lot to do in a quarter."

Philosopher, course, Derrida's Glas...

That's the title of his book which means death knell...when they ring bell at a funeral. Now the first sentence of his book is, "what remains of absolute knowing. Derrida is sort of saying for our time, what's left of this? What remains? But the way he says it in French is a bit of a joke because he's saying, "What are the remains of absolute knowledge? Its as though absolute knowledge was a corpse... laid out there... And so, my title was Derrida's Glass: What [Are the] Remains of Absolute Knowledge? This is a technical course description which spells out 4 major themes I want graduate students to look for in the book because it is so anti-structural..."

...We switch to another course...I had been invited by a colleague in another department to do a course addressing a particular theme that had to do with identity...so, I had been working on architecture and I'd been working on this theme of the uncanny, this thing that architects are interested in because the German word for uncanny means, "not at hone." it means literally, not being at home. In doing some research, I had been reading some wonderful essays: one by Freud on the uncanny; then I read the stuff he was reading in order to write his essay. And his main author is E.T.A. Hoffman who wrote a story called, "The Sandman." I decided to call the course, "Varieties of the Uncanny." In addition to Freud's idea, I already knew from the start that Heidigger had written a whole bunch of stuff on this uncanniness- and he sort of felt it was a basic component of what makes us human: a strange feeling of alienation, not being rooted. so, I began to say, Heidigger, Freud, the architects...this must be big stuff! ...So I began to read around in the literature. I also talked with my brother who is a professor in French who told me about the compte fantastique, sort of ghost stories...Guy de Maupassant and others...he gave me a whole list of things. I spent the summer reading around; one or two of them wound up on my syllabus.

Then I said, "what else do I want? I began to think of Mary Shelly's Frankenstein, the classic, and realized that I hadn't looked at it in 20-25 years. so, I reread it...and decided I want to do this. I began conceptualizing what could be described as the phenomenology of the uncanny. How do you know its happening to you when its happening to you? What is this feeing? How can you build a whole genre of literature around it? Why should a 20th century philosopher say this is what we are? Those were my questions and I sort o build them into the course description... A lot of books...I took care that they were cheap and I xeroxed some things too.

Assignments were designed to take students outside of the classroom. I wanted them to learn how to use the Oxford English Dictionary, the big 16-20 volume thing in the library. So I picked a series of words, English words surrounding the uncanny --canny; cunning (which actually has the same roots); ken...and so I asked them to look up these 4 words, read the articles and tell

me about them. No more specific than that and I got beautiful papers. Later on in the term, I did a second paper, based not on the OED but on a foreign language dictionary. Because this was a comp lit course, I wanted to do something to commit to a foreign language and give them a bit of confidence about working in another language. For students who never had a second language, we worked on an alternative assignment based on the OED. Everybody else was doing Spanish, French, German...Two students wrote in Greek. And their job was to find out a whole field of words in their language which responded to this set of feelings called the uncanny.

I got some of the best papers I've ever had from university students. No body was bored, although many had thought that they would be. They discovered things I didn't know...Like a midwife in Scotland and Ireland is called a canny woman --part science, part art--so she's actually an uncanny woman. some things changes as I was teaching the course...and in the end, lots of things changes because students had wonderful ideas. Several of them offered very insightful suggestions regarding the (re)sequencing of readings...Also, I had begun giving reading quizzes...but after a while, I could trust them...so, i wound up getting 5 little quizzes and two major papers: seven marks. Everyone was happy. I did not feel the need to control...I included the Boris Karlov movie on Frankenstein, Bergman's "Cries and Whispers," and everyone went to see Ford Coppola's, "Dracula." ...We wound up thematizing what we called the uncanniness of the house or kind of space -- domestic space, the uncanniness of the body -- the human body, and uncanniness of language..."

Changes in One's Teaching Over Time

In response to the question about how their ideas about teaching and learning have changed since the began teaching, each professor could point to some fundamental change in his or her teaching which has grown out of their own experiences and reflections. Issues ranged from a consideration of a difference in perception of self and one's role as a teacher, methods of teaching and matters of style, expectations of students and understanding of student learning. Below are brief comments from various interviewees:

> *"...My teaching has changed drastically...have come to challenge the notion of teacher as knower and student as tabula rasa."*
>
> *"I now expect students to better writers than before...and yet in other ways I am more accepting of student foibles."*
>
> *[Similarly, another professor offered], "I am much more aware of the difficulties students have in grasping things...and am more aware of learning disabilities...and my teaching is now much more interactive."*
>
> *"I now communicate much more explicitly my expectations of students [in terms of what I want them to learn and their responsibility to do the necessary work].*
>
> *"When I first graduated from grad school, I believed that there was a sacred body of knowledge that students should learn... now I hope that students will begin to be able to perceive things on their own and to use their own words to interpret [what they see in] images..."*
>
> *"A great deal less lecturing...I have been shifting to more interactive work with students using small groups with a great emphasis on group process and discussion.*

In this regard, another commented, "My classes are now more student centered with and emphasis on student learning and understanding."

"When I first began teaching, I typed out all of my lecture notes. Now I have dispensed with that. I still plan very carefully, but now I am willing [and able] to let go. I'm smarter about preparing in a different way...no bulldozing through material..."

"When I began teaching, I was going to change the world over night...[I] felt it was absolutely imperative for the teacher not to be the teacher...I've learned that all the textbook stuff about critical education cannot work in a vacuum--but must be undertaken with a sensitivity not just about who I am, but also about who my students are and what they are about."

Thoughts on Successfulness in Teaching and Achieving One's Goals

Responses to this question can be clustered into five categories in terms of perceived degrees of success, or in one instance aa belief that such is immaterial. The following breakdown illustrates the categories which emerged with the number in the parenthesis indicating the number of professors espousing a particular view:

"I know and feel quite...very confident of my success and achievement as a teacher..." (3)

"I see myself as relatively successful, as pretty good, as moderately successful; generally pretty successful." (4)

"I am successful in my teaching; however, I qualify this in that I know I am successful when I can reach and engage the whole class, but this does not always happen...Not as successful as I would like to be, but more successful than I used to be." (2)

"I'm not concerned with success. Giacommetti said, 'If you're satisfied, something is wrong with your goals.'" (1)

"I don't know. It depends upon the degree of engagement of students in each class and the times they come to discuss things with me either during a class or even once a given class is over." (1)

Metaphors (and Descriptive Words and Phrases)

Originally, I had phrased the open ended prompt as follows: What metaphors would you use to describe your orientation to teaching? My intent was to elicit comments to provide imagery to enable one to visualize their self concept and/or approach to teaching. What I discovered was that most of the interviewees had not thought of this before and had to think briefly before responding. Furthermore, two respondents were frankly stumped: one (a linguist) said that "the question marginalized her and that it made her think about how her own questions might marginalize students. Another respondent, a physicist said, " teaching is teaching...learning is learning...They are not like anything else. Here, he was differentiating between metaphors and similes. So, in

the process of posing the related question, I modified my prompt by adding, "or descriptive words or phrases to describe your teaching...or you as a teacher." Nine of the eleven respondents articulated their imagery and two offered descriptive words and phrases. The following quotes provide a sense of the variation and texture of the responses:

Metaphors

> *"...diagnosis and prescription...taking the ceiling off notions of knowing."*
>
> *"opening up the world...making interdisciplinary connections."*
>
> *" [I love] students as flowers opening up..."*
>
> *"...a vehicle for other people that enables them to go someplace they would not have been able to go: roller blades; a carriage, a bicycle, a car, a pair of wings...I would like to have an airplane to take students on a five year journey all over the world."*
>
> *"midwife, mentor, facilitator...one who stimulates students towards risk taking, creativity and growth."*
>
> *"provocateur... one who gets people to think...not just get them mad, but to move them," ...doing this with care like in judo, the gentle art...So even if you're gonna throw somebody on the floor with some terrible intellectual thing, you don't want them to feel the floor when they hit it... a trickster, a seducer in getting students to learn."*
>
> *"to jump stark students' minds...and to be seen as a friend, facilitator, encourager, a supportive, interested, deep listener."*
>
> *"an intellectual mother. I hold a belief that a good teacher provides the kind of nurturance that a good parent provides... a mentor who pushes us to read harder... to be more and better...to translate experiences into meanings for ourselves."*

Descriptive words and phrases as alternative responses --

> *"enthusiastic, committed, caring, demanding and...fair...good at synthesis."*
>
> *"one who tries to be humorous and is challenging."*

Additional Thoughts and Concerns

Upon completion of the interview sessions, there were a number of issues which were revisited by several interviewees. The same issues re-emerged in the culminating session in which nine of the eleven professors participated. The issues identified were as follows: **grading and evaluation of student learning and work** (the discussion focused upon the need to examine critically how we evaluate students with several participants suggesting that we need to discuss, debate this and construct alternatives); concerns about **faculty reviews, peer evaluations**, purposes, uses and abuses, possibilities and limitations (these thoughts were related to

faculty development and the need for greater consideration of differences in teaching goals and hence, approaches and styles which may or not be shared by one's colleagues); **the importance of professors talking about their teaching**, sharing and exchanging ideas not only with others in one's discipline but also with individuals in other disciplines and fields (In this regard, the majority of participants commented upon how participating in this project has made them think about things that they would not "normally" reflect upon and that it was a valuable experience which "reaffirmed the importance of what we do and the time we invest in planning, developing courses and teaching); **the context and environment of our work**, particularly regarding values placed on competition which mitigates against experimentation and risk taking; a concern **that we validate other kinds of knowledge** than classroom knowledge and involve students in more outside-of-the classroom learning experiences (here, one individual specifically articulated an idea that served as a catalyst for thinking: "that we should declare a couple of days in each quarter as 'classroom free days', call off instruction, and get ourselves and our students more into the world and provide more interdisciplinary experiences').

Insights and Ideas for Further Research...

The purpose of this project was to engage in discovery. From this small study about how professors "make choices in conceiving, expressing justifying, and taking action towards desired states of affairs" (Harris 1991, p. 285), I have gained insight into the complexities of professor's thinking about their teaching and curriculum development. While the methodologies and processes used are highly textured, nuanced, and unique, patterns do emerge and individuals indicate a general preference for ways in which they initiate conceptualization of a course and the development of a syllabus; yet, individuals change their approaches to teaching and curriculum development dependant upon the context: whether the venture is individual or team; whether it is a new course, a course undergoing revision, something which intrigues someone, consideration of intended student population, level of the course and supportive climate for innovation and risk taking. In practice, different professors use different approaches when developing different kinds of courses as reflected in those instances in which during the interviews individuals described differences in processes used to develop different courses.

In this exploration of how professors think about their work and make sense of their practices, I have discovered a number of things which make me want to learn more: the deliberative process about teaching and curriculum is linked with individual and disciplinary values which inform teaching and decision making and planning. And these things are linked to one's reasons for teaching and thoughts on the aims and purposes of education; invariably there is synchrony between these elements and professors

strive to enact their beliefs through their practices -- implicitly or explicitly.

This inquiry based study has been an initiation into research on discovering what and how university professors think of their work as teachers. The deliberative process is rooted in questioning and the desire to learn more. When professors engage in this process they engage in critical thinking, problem-posing, problem-solving and idea generation. How they think and act is grounded in their beliefs, values and goals. In my future work regarding deliberation on teaching and curriculum in higher education I intend to further explore the themes which have emerged from this study and to consciously expand the focus to include attention to the ways in which research informs teaching and how teaching informs research and scholarly activities. What now intrigues me is the nature of the relationships between subjectivity, reasoning, and disciplinary knowledge in the deliberative processes of teaching and curriculum development.

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